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Examiners' Report
June 2011

GCE Japanese 6JA01 01

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Introduction

Candidates seemed well prepared for all sections of the AS examination this year. It is clear that candidates are working hard to acquire the new kanji, vocabulary and grammatical structures required at AS level, as well as learning about the various different topics listed in the specification.

Most candidates are making a very good effort to produce a good quality, long piece of writing in Section C, with even the weakest candidates making an effort to write the best part of a page on this question. Section B, the translation, is more variable, but the stronger candidates did all have a reasonable attempt at this section, albeit with mixed results.

Reading quickly enough and getting through the whole paper appears to be problematic for some of the weakest candidates, although it is good to see that they are focussing their efforts on section C, which carries the most marks.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to choose the grammatically correct answer (eg ふかいですか or きれいですか for part c), even if they chose the distractor rather than the correct answer. (c) turned out to be difficult for candidates, with some also getting confused over the kanji (and consequently choosing the wrong answer) for (d).

Question 3

Almost all candidates attempted this whole question. They need to be careful to tick the correct number of boxes. Candidates need to read thoroughly and carefully when they are reading longer sentences involving relative clauses, or permission / obligation type of grammatical structures.

Question 4

This section was very well attempted, and it is pleasing to see that candidates are putting so much effort into learning their kanji. The vast majority of candidates were able to read at least (c) はじめた. In part (a), the little ゆ and the long vowel う often caused problems. In part (b), the majority of candidates were able to read し, but some candidates did not know the compound, and しごう was often offered as an incorrect answer.

Question 5

The majority of candidates attempted to answer all parts of Q05, which was very pleasing. The only question which caused significant difficulty in terms of the content of the answer was (i), where many candidates were confused as to whether she always liked practice or not. Presumably the word つらい was not in their vocabulary, as many candidates wrote that she always enjoyed her practice as she would like to be in the Olympics. Many candidates offered self-contradictory answers such as "たつきゅうは大好きですから、いつも楽しいと思っ
ていません。"

Candidates had no problem in answering the content of (g), but often had difficulty with the grammar, and answers such as パワーをつけなければいけません were common. This would have given them the content mark, but not contributed to their quality of language mark.

Candidates recognised (h) as a comparative question, and were generally able to give the correct answer, although few of them were able to give it in the grammatically correct form. Again, this would have given them the content mark, but not contributed to their quality of language mark.

The following clip illustrates the performance typical of a strong candidate.

5 質問に日本語の文で答えなさい。

(a) 前田さんの たつきゅうのコーチは だれですか。

(1)

前田さんのお父さんです。

(b) 前田さんは、年上の人と たつきゅうをして、試合に かったこと
がありますか。

(1)

はい、大学生や大人と たつきゅうをした時、かつ事が ^{でき}ました。

(c) 前田さんが動くとき、スピードは どうですか。

(1)

彼のスピードは、すばらしい ~~です。~~

(d) 前田さんは たつきゅうで、何が特に上手ですか。

(1)

左手の バックハンドの ちが最高です。

(e) 前田さんは、どうして よくお姉さんの高校へ行きますか。

(1)

高校の たつきゅう部の 強い生徒と 一緒に練習 しますから。

(f) 前田さんが高校生の男子と試合をすると、どう なりますか。

(1)

ふつう 前田さんが かつ事 ができます。

(g) 前田さんはオリンピックに出たいと思っています。その前に、
どうしなければいけませんか。

(1)

~~パワー~~ パワーをつける事がしなければなりません。

(h) たっきゅうをする時間は、平日と休日と、どちらのほうが多いで
すか。

(1)

休日は平日より たっきゅうをする時間はもっと長いです。

(i) 前田さんはいつも練習が楽しいと思っていますか。本文のどこ
から、そう思いますか。

(2)

「たっきゅうが大好き」と言って、週に5回高校へ
行って もっと練習したいと言っています。オリンピックの
ゆめのためにも大切です。



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Examiner Comments

All the questions have been attempted, and the candidate has made a genuine effort to answer the questions in their own words rather than just copy out large chunks of the text.

(f) was not awarded the mark as ぶつう was taken to be an over-interpretation of the original text.

Note the use of the 時 and ことができました in (b). These were original and not copied from either the passage or the questions, which is why this candidate was given a 4 for the quality of language. To get a 5, the candidate would have needed to do this for other questions as well.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should remember that these questions are being marked for quality of language as well as content. They should try their best to write in grammatically correct sentences and include AS grammar where they can.

Question 6

This translation proved to be quite challenging for candidates.

In the first sentence, candidates often missed the fact that it was the third road that had been opened, and instead said that three roads had been opened. Some candidates missed the past tense. The 誕生 in the third sentence was commonly missed, in an otherwise well tackled sentence. The 自転車で走る was often mis-translated as "cross by bicycle or running".

The second paragraph was perhaps the most accessible, although a surprising number of candidates struggled with the place names 本州、四国 and 広島: all of which were assumed to be known from GCSE. More understandable was the difficulty candidates had with 大小9つの島, the 大小 often just being ignored. The 7000お<円 also caused problems - candidates who wrote out a large number of zeros often got the number of zeros wrong, whereas some candidates missed out the お< altogether. It surprised the examiners that common sense did not alert candidates that something was wrong if they were claiming a bridge could be built for 7000 yen. The verb "cost" also caused a lot of problems, with "costed" commonly being offered.

The katakana word アーチ caused great difficulties, with the name "Archie" often being offered as a translation. Many candidates seemed to have difficulties in grasping the basic idea that the road consisted of a series of bridges, leading to many translations such as "cross the road".

The last two sentences were better tackled, with many candidates making a reasonable attempt at both. Some candidates confused 秋 with spring. The use of the word "play" as a translation for 遊びに行く was not allowed - please encourage candidates to write idiomatic English.

Please note that these translations are now marked sentence by sentence, with each sentence being given 1 mark if it is correct (one or two small mistakes are allowed), half marks if the subject and verb are correct but a lot of other information is incorrect or missing, and 0 marks if the meaning of the sentence is not clearly conveyed.

Walk across "Sea's Road" Opening

~~Between~~ Between Honshū and Shikoku is a ^{new} three-lane ^{bridge} ~~bridge~~. There are ^{colour-} cars of course, bicycles and ~~the~~ walkways/pavements. Enjoy the emerald green ^{colour} of the beautiful Setonai sea, walk leisurely, ^{across} or ^{you can} run by bicycles on the "Sea's Road"'s birth.

This bridge joins Honshū's Hiroshima and Shikoku's Ehime together. At 160km, the Setonai sea has 9 big and small islands, with 10 bridges along it. At the start of 1975, over 7000 yen was raised.

When taking this enjoyable route, from this bridge, there are ^{also} various other bridges. Still, also on this island, there are flower displays and also other famous places, ^{there's many} ~~various~~ fun things! Until Autumn, because there are many seasonal events, everybody, please go and play in Shikoku.



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Examiner Comments

This response is typical of a weaker candidate, although by no means the weakest. The first sentence was given 0 as the "three lane" is incorrect, as well as the "bridge". The second and third sentences were both given half marks as the basic information is conveyed, but there is incorrect information too. The sentence "This bridge joins..." was given 1, although the next three sentences were all given 0 as the meaning is not conveyed correctly. The final two sentences were given half marks as the basic idea was conveyed, although there is also some incorrect or missing information eg historical and several hundred. This gave a total mark of 3 for this translation.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should keep going right until the end, however hard they find the translation. Sometimes the easiest sentences are in the middle or at the end, and candidates will pick up marks for any parts of the translation they can do. Candidates should remember to write good English, and keep a "common sense check" on anything that is written.

This is an example of a translation produced by a very strong candidate.

~~The new bridge that one can walk over~~, "The road of the sea".
By walking, you can cross (Newly released)

A ~~new~~ 3rd road that connects Hōnshū to Shikoku has just been ~~made~~ made. There are roads for cars, cyclists and pedestrians. You can walk, cycle over the bridges and enjoy the ~~beautiful~~ scenery of the beautiful Setonai Sea; This is the birth of, 'The road of the sea'.

This road connects Hiroshima, in Hōnshū to Ehime prefecture in Shikoku. The ^{total} length of this road is 60km and it passes through 9 big to small islands in the Setonai Sea ^{which are all connected by} 10 ^{bridges} ~~parts~~. Construction began in 1975 and it cost ~~7000000000~~ ^{700 million} 70 billion yen.

One of the enjoyments of passing this ~~bridge~~ ^{road} is ~~looking~~ ^{passing} through ~~the~~ the Arch bridge and other types of bridges. ~~Each~~ ^{some of the} islands ~~has many flowers~~, are famous for their flowers, ^{or home} a famous history, ^{so} there are lots of ways in which they can be ^{famous} enjoyed. There are hundreds of events scheduled until ~~the~~ autumn, so why not think of coming to Shikoku for your holiday?



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This translation scored a mark of 8.
The only actual mistake is the number "70 billion yen".
Minor improvements to the quality of English could be made, for example, in line 2 with the use of the phrase "just been made" applied to a road, "big to small islands" in line 9 and in line 12 with the use of the word "enjoyments."

Question 7

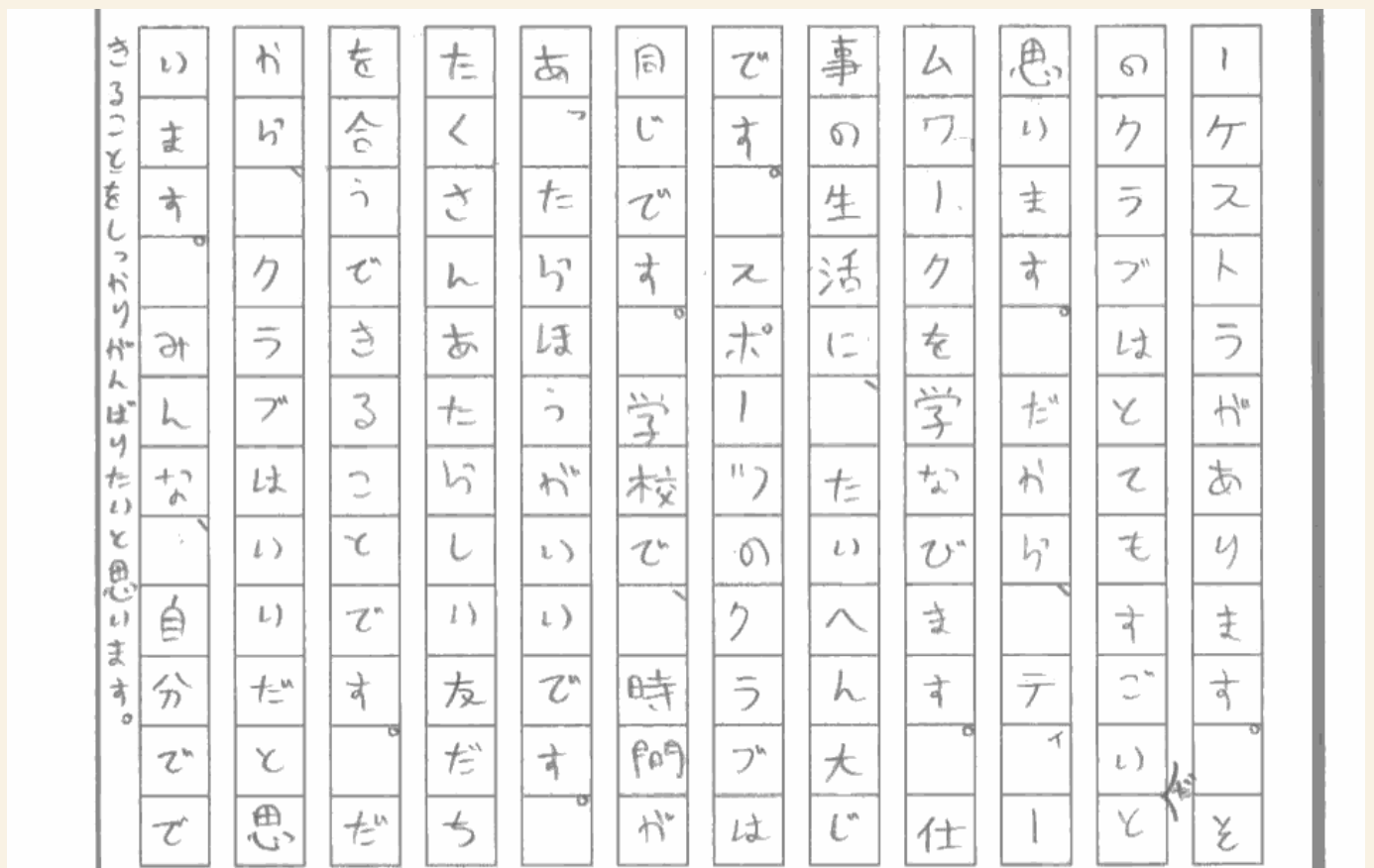
It was clear that candidates were trying really hard to write a good essay. Most candidates attempted to address the three bullet points and write a paragraph on each. The first two bullet points seem to have been understood by most candidates, whilst the third caused more difficulty. Candidates often wrote about all the clubs they were involved in without linking it in any way to their future dream, or what useful skills they were picking up through their extra curricular activities.

The second bullet point (what are you studying in school?) was deliberately accessible so that even the weakest candidates had an opportunity to write about something. However, the strongest candidates should not have been satisfied with just a list of subjects they are studying at school, but should have expanded on this point to give their opinions about the subjects, and should have linked their reasons for choosing / working hard on a particular subject with their future dream.

Candidates should plan their answer before starting to write. Some failed to do so and thus ran out of ideas half way through, and then introduced another dream - this often meant that the essay did not flow well as a coherent whole.

It is clear that candidates are trying very hard to include lots of AS grammar and kanji. This is welcomed, but candidates are reminded of the need to be accurate and appropriate in their use of language.

This is an example of a candidate who has been very careful to get a high "content and response" mark, even though their AS language is fairly limited.



私	の	学	校	に	は	大	き	な	オ
も	幸	せ	に	感	じ	ま	す		
タ	ジ	オ	が	あ	り	ま	す	が	ら
す	ご	く	リ	コ	ー	デ	イ	ン	グ
に	と	い	て	と	も	い	い	で	す
を	勉	強	を	し	ま	す	私	の	ゆ
ま	す	学	校	に	は	お	ん	が	く
私	は	イ	ギ	リ	ス	に	す	ん	で
え	い	が	が	大	好	き	だ	が	ら
て	コ	ソ	ホ	ー	ズ	を	し	て	
す	た	ぶ	ん	ホ	リ	ウ	ノ	ド	に
す	コ	ソ	ホ	ー	ザ	ー	に	な	り
									ま

そ	の	人	の	よ	う	に	な	り	ま
今	私	の	将	来	の	ゆ	め	は	
も	び	く	り	し	ま	し	た		
き	る	こ	と	で	し	た		と	そ
ト	ラ	ジ	ペ	ト	を	ひ	く	で	
ピ	ア	ノ	ヤ	バ	イ	オ	リ	ソ	ヤ
う	た	を	書	ま	し	た		ま	た
た	が	れ	は	い	ろ	い	ろ	な	
こ	い	コ	ン	ポ	ー	ザ	ー	で	し
あ	の	お	ん	が	く	家	は		す
ソ	サ	ー	ト	に	行	き	ま	し	た
	子	ど	も	の	時		い	い	コ



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Examiner Comments

This candidate was given 19 (Task understood and developed successfully) on the content criterion. All three bullet points have been addressed, and they connect nicely to each other. The long introduction is suitable and interesting, but perhaps could have been cut down a bit, since it does take up a third of the essay. Similarly on the third page, the parts about sports clubs and having more time at school could have been eliminated, to give more space to fully develop the idea of musicianship - this would have taken the mark into the top band.

The language is generally accurate, although lacking in some basic kanji, and also tending to use more GCSE rather than AS structures. For this reason, this piece was given a mark of 11 (satisfactory communication) rather than 12 (good communication). To reach the 12 mark band a larger number of AS structures would need to be used correctly.



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Examiner Tip

Remember that there are more marks for content (28) rather than language (18), so candidates should ensure they plan their essay and include full details in response to all the bullet points.

They should use AS grammatical structures and kanji, if they can, to score high marks on the "quality of language" criterion.

Paper Summary

In order to improve performance, candidates should:

(1) Repeatedly practice writing essays. The message that candidates need to include AS structures seems to have been acknowledged, however, teachers should emphasize to them that these need to be used appropriately. Some candidates give the impression that they will put down a random たことがあります because they have been taught it in class so think it is important. However, they have no awareness that it has a specific meaning only applicable in a specific context.

(2) Pay more attention to the content of their essays. Please also note that with this specification, the content of their writing carries 28 marks, whereas the quality of language carries 18 marks. It is therefore vital that candidates focus even more on the content of what they are writing, and not only on the kanji and grammatical structures they include. The skills of planning an essay need to be practiced.

(3) Attempt all parts of the paper, including the translation.

(4) Learn to use 原稿用紙 correctly.

(5) Remember that their quality of language is also marked when they are answering comprehension questions.

(6) Learn the various grammatical structures for permission, prohibition and obligation very thoroughly, as they often seem to get muddled up.

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